Integrating UBD and DI

Chapter 1 Response:

Throughout this chapter I noticed that there were a lot of things that I may not have really thought about too much, but when I saw it I had thought, that is definitely something I would do. As I continued to read I realized that, although I want to do this, or I thought I am definitely going to do this, I realized that I am going to need to put more effort into making sure I am combining both UBD and DI. This will make it so I have a curriculum design as well as instructional designs that not only complement each other, but also cater to every student. I think that this first chapter has pointed out a lot of things that should have been obvious to me before, but I didn’t really pay mind to it too much, like the four elements teachers attend to. I am going to have to make sure I never lose sight of one of my elements, or focus more on one than the others; it takes a balance of all these elements to create quality learning and a quality learning environment. One of the ideas that stood out most to me, and that I will definitely use, is the formative and on-going assessments that Mr. Alext used. It is very beneficial because it helps develop, and continue to develop small-group and individual learning plans for each student. It is important to remember that each student has a different learning style, and although some students will have a similar learning style as others, no student is the same, they are all unique, and I must acknowledge this.

Chapter 2 Response:

I enjoyed this chapter a lot. I am still a student, however, I think I have forgotten what being a student in middle and high school was like. Being a college student is very different from being a student in grades K-12 and that may be because it’s just a different scenario, we are all considered adults. I had two favorite quotes from this chapter that will impact me and my classroom. The first is, “Each year, students reinforce for those teachers that the journey is a shared endeavor and that the best-laid plans of the best teachers are just that---plans, subject to change.” I agree with this 100%, it is a journey for both the teacher and the students, I will be teaching my class, and in return they will most likely be teaching me things I did not know about myself. The second quote is, “Learning happens within students, not to them.” This really made me think. I agree with this totally, but I got to thinking about how to actually get students to learn, they must want to learn. I would say most students in high school are there because they have to be, not because they want to be, and although I find Health to be fascinating, there will be students who despise my classroom. It is my job to make everyone love health at least half as much as I do, so that they will want to know more and the learning will come from within.

Chapter 3 Response:

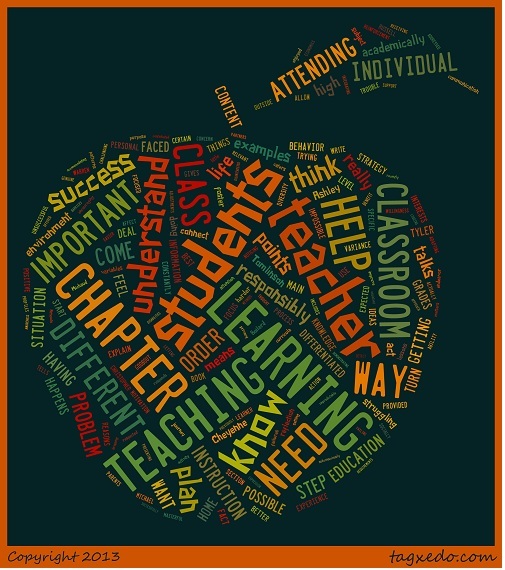
This chapter was all about standards, it explains how they were intended to “focus teaching and learning, curriculum development, and provide a basis for accountability systems.” It also talked about how learning results should be considered in terms of understanding the big ideas and core processes within the content standards. The big topic, however, was backward design. Backward design supports flexibility in teaching. It also honors integrity of content while respecting the individuality of learners. When planning backward, desired results should not be differentiated, however assessment evidence may be differentiated and learning plan should be differentiated. This will be very helpful for me. Using backward design will maximize the likelihood of all my students being successful since it is individualized. Although you want the same results for all your students, it is important to realize that all students are unique in their learning styles. I think using backward design will have a huge impact in my classroom in many ways; one being that students will be more likely to be engaged, as I will try to form a unique assessment and learning plan for different students. Another way it will impact my classroom could be the success rate. This is because the desired outcomes will be the same for every student. Every student is capable of achieving each of the standards, they may just use a different technique of how they get to that level of achievement.

Chapter 4 Response:

“Learning has much more to do with one’s ability to organize and use ideas and skills to address problems than with the retention of data.” What a brilliant statement. I thoroughly agree with this, sure anyone can just remember what they saw in a book, but it takes the ability of organization and using your ideas and skills to truly be learning something; even more so to master something. Another awesome quote is, “the more powerful the curriculum, the greater the possibilities for the classroom, the teacher, and the students.” Again, I thoroughly agree! A powerful curriculum is engaging to students, it makes them want to continue on learning in your class, it makes them want to stay and keep going even after the bell has rung. I am the one who is responsible for making a curriculum and ensuring that it is meaningful and powerful. A powerful curriculum will not only engage my students and make them want to be in class and want to learn, but it will also create a bond between me and my students as well as new bonds formed between each other. I will benefit from my students eagerness to come to class everyday because of the curriculum I have created. A powerful curriculum can also help me gain respect from my students, as well as me possibly gaining a new respect for my students as I will learn more about whom they are and what they think about.

Chapter 5 Response:

The fifth chapter of the book Understand by Design focuses on assessment. It tells us how to use assessments effectively in testing students’ skills, abilities, and knowledge. The concept of multiple assessments stuck out to me, I agreed with the author’s idea of the single snapshot versus an entire album of photos. Much like a single photo can capture you at just the right moment to make you look like a model, it can also catch you at the right moment where you look as though you just woke up after someone smacked you in the face with a book. Assessments are similar in that they can catch you on a good day where you know the answer to every question in the entire world, as well as they can catch you on the day that your brain has seemed to just check out. I understand that as a teacher it is my idea to know and understand that each of my students can and most likely will have different learning styles from one another. I must master being able to create lessons and assessments that all of my students will flourish with as well as struggle with. I personally think that sometimes a challenge can be a good thing, however, that is my learning style. Knowing that some students may struggle and have a truly hard time because of this I must also think of ways to help the struggling students. Not all assessments are going to be tests, some will be projects (individual or group) and some might be writing an essay, which I can help students with if they need it.



**Abstract:**

The student was the main focus in chapter two of Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe's book, Understanding by Design. There were two major concepts that seemed to stick out to our class; one being variance, and the other being student-teacher relationships. As a teacher you must be ready for anything (which I think many of us got the chance to truly experience while we were in the schools over the past 3-4 weeks). The flow of a class can take a turn at any moment, some classes have a higher risk than others of doing so. It is important for a teacher to be open to individual learning styles, noticing students' behavior and possible changes in their usual behavior, or a student struggling or excelling. Every student is unique in every way, this includes learning style and behavioral patterns (can't learn vs. won't learn), and it is up to teachers to notice and find a means to fix any problems their classroom faces, whether it be on an individual scale or involving the whole class. In order to fully benefit your students with this variance you must get to know each of them. Just looking at a student, for the most part, will not give you enough information about what their home life or school life is like. Some student's can do an exceptional job hiding their true feelings, whether they are good or bad feelings. Some students may have learning disabilities which can affect them in many ways, academically, physically, socially, etc. We, as teachers, must do everything possible to get to know and understand our students, this is the foundation for teaching them.

**Synthesis:**

Our main interest seems to be *wanting to connect with students*. We know that we will have students coming into our classrooms who will already have the mindset of failure. We, as educators, know that every student has the ability to learn, and deserves the opportunity to do so. Some students just may need a little more instruction or time, some students may need you to make a connection to something else they really enjoy to see the relevance, but every student has this potential to understand. We must learn how to create  
[postive relationships](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/building-positive-relationships-ELL-larry-ferlazzo-katie-hull-sypnieski) with *all* of our students; once this happens, we will be able to teach each student on an individual level. Need some help coming up with some [strategies and other tips](http://pinterest.com/cehuemer/learning-is-fun/) on how to get to know your students better or create individual based learning? Surprisingly pinterest has a lot of creative ideas that have worked for other teachers and students. I think we can all agree that it is important to have a plan, as well as a back up plan, because things may not always go the way you have planned them to go, the "strategies and other tips" link can be very helpful if you actually look through some of the ideas posted!